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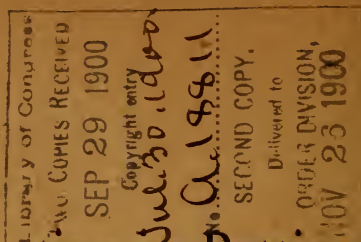
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BOSTON
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1900

53663



A Detective in Petticoats

CHARACTERS

(As originally produced by the Emanuel Club, of Radcliffe College, under the title of "A Lover in Duplicate," at Fay House, May 16th, 1896.)

MRS. EVELYN WARRINGTON.

OCTAVIA FROTHINGHAM, } *her sister, an heiress and a Radcliffe graduate.*

GEORGIE NAPPER, *a detective from Chicago.*

MARY, *Mrs. Warrington's maid.*

MRS. CUMMINGS, } *Friends of Mrs. Warrington.*

MRS. GREEN,

MARY, *a servant.*

Other ladies at Mrs. Warrington's tea.



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A Detective in Petticoats

ACT I

SCENE.—MRS. WARRINGTON'S *dressing-room*. MRS. WARRINGTON *seated at dressing-table R., dressed for a ball. MAID is doing her hair. OCTAVIA on sofa L., front, reading, in tea-gown. Bookcase above her.*

MRS. W. How slow you are to-night, Mary. It must be time to go. Octavia, do leave off reading just one moment, and see if Jack is ready. (*Exit OCTAVIA, still reading, R.*) How can she be so absorbed in that awful book? Why, the words themselves make me so dizzy, that I have never found out whether they mean anything or not.

Enter OCTAVIA R.

OCT. Jack says that the less often he is interrupted, the sooner he will be ready. (*Seats herself again, reading.*)

MRS. W. Why, what nonsense! (*Runs to door R. and calls.*) Jack, you declared you'd be dressed first, and now I've got to wait for you half an hour, I suppose, with nothing whatever to do. What? Well, why shouldn't I be excited? Besides, I'm not a bit excited to-night. I dare say it will be a great bore. We want to go early, so we can come home early, and receive the baroness. How soon will you be ready, Jack? Fifteen minutes? Oh, dear, do hurry! Who, I? Oh, I'm almost ready. (*Runs back and sits.*) Finish as quickly as you can, Mary.

OCT. Don't you want me to read this chapter while you are waiting?

MRS. W. What a good idea! I was wondering how I ever could get time to finish it. I don't know how I could get along without you, Octavia, to keep me up with the movement of the age. There are so many things to think of, nowadays.

Here's "A Short Cut Through Religion," and a report from "The Society for Feline Emancipation from Vivisection," and a pamphlet on "Bonesetting by Theosophic Methods," and this long article on "Psychology of the Lungs," all to be read and sent on this week.

MAID. Please, ma'am, if you could sit still, one minute ——

MRS. W. Oh, yes, well. Go on, Octavia.

OCT. (*reads*). "Chapter One" ——

MRS. W. By the way, the baroness is very literary, Octavia; you will find her very congenial. Her letters are written in the most beautiful English. You would never imagine she had never been in America. One reason I want to get all these books read before to-morrow, is that I shall feel so left out in the cold, when you talk together.

OCT. Then, hadn't I better begin to read?

MRS. W. Oh, yes, that's a dear. She can speak eight languages, you know.

OCT. Who?

MRS. W. Cousin Lydia. I suppose I must call her that, if she *is* a baroness,—and Frances says she dresses beautifully. I suppose she will be in exquisite mourning, and bring a maid. I hope she won't think us very primitive.

OCT. Why should she? I don't think I shall care for her.

MRS. W. Why, what are you saying? She's *a baroness*! I think I will put a few more books in her room. Where's "Mill's Political Economy"?

OCT. I am reading it to you—or, rather, I haven't had a chance to read a word of it, yet. Shall I begin? (*Reads.*) "Chapter One" ——

MRS. W. Wait just one minute, and tell me how my hair looks. (*Takes hand-glass.*) Oh, I don't like it at all, do you, Octavia? Why, the feathers don't match the dress, and it looks so stiff! Don't you *hate* it, Octavia?

OCT. (*without looking up*). Yes.

MRS. W. I knew you would. I wish I'd had the flowers, instead. Isn't there time to change? There are the flowers on the table, Mary. Wait, let's see again. Yes, it's perfectly horrid. Take the feathers out, as quick as you can. What would you do, Octavia?

OCT. I don't know. What difference does it make? Evelyn, do you care to hear the rest of the chapter?

MRS. W. Certainly I do. It's so interesting. I had forgotten all about it. Where were we? (*Runs to door R. and*

calls.) Jack, which do you like best in my hair, feathers or flowers? No, you needn't say you like either,—you've got to decide. Feathers? Oh, Jack, how can you? Why, they're hideous, and I've just taken them all out. You don't really like feathers best, do you? Just wait till you see the other way. I'm sure you'll like it,—and I can't wear those feathers, even for your sake. (*Sits again.*)

OCT. Well, are you ready? (*Reads.*) “In every department of human affairs, practice long precedes science.”

MRS. W. Speaking of science, that reminds me, I must find out from Jack, to-night, the address of that medium he went to see,—the one he spoke of as such a fraud, the night the professor was here. Do you remember?

OCT. Yes, but I don't see what a medium has to do with this book.

MRS. W. Oh, don't stop to argue. You are always saying, Octavia, that it is the duty of every woman to investigate these matters for herself. And so as *everybody* is having a seance at her house now, I don't mean to be left out, whether Jack approves or not. Octavia, *you* get the address for me. Jack won't suspect *you* of believing in anything. (*Exit OCTAVIA R.*) I wish I could make Octavia take an interest in men, and society. I don't see how she is ever going to marry if she goes on in this way.

Reënter OCTAVIA R.

OCT. Jack is walking up and down the hall, and looking very savage. He says he has called you six times, and wants to know if you are ever going to be ready.

MRS. W. Dear me, of course I'm ready. Hurry, Mary, put my cloak on. Where are my gloves? (*Calls.*) I'm coming, Jack. How could I know it was so late? How long has he been waiting, Octavia?

OCT. He says, half an hour; and he remarked that he would be hanged if he would ever take you at your word again.

MRS. W. How unkind! I'm sure I'm always the one to wait. Did you get my fan and slippers? Oh, dear, I know it will be stupid! I've a great mind not to go! (*Calls.*) Yes, Jack. (*To OCTAVIA.*) Good-bye, dear. You'll sit up for Cousin Lydia, won't you? (*Calls.*) Yes, Jack, I'm coming. [*Exit MRS. WARRINGTON L.*]

MAID. Are you going to be reading here long, miss? (R.)

OCT. (L.) No, I think not, Mary. You may put the other

books away. I don't know how it is, but I find it hard to devote myself to intellectual pursuits away from college.

MAID. I'm sure, miss, you're studying all the time. And just look at all the books you've written! (*Points to bookcase.*)

OCT. You don't understand. That's only one book.

MAID. One! Why, count them, miss.

OCT. Yes, but they're all alike. I keep a few copies to give my friends. I never wrote but this one book, on Woman's Suffrage, and I'm sorry to say it's not very popular in New York. This is such a frivolous atmosphere.

MAID. I'm sure, miss, they say it's very good air for the lungs.

OCT. Possibly. But what I complain of, Mary, is that I am so much looked up to as a superior being, that I am never invited out anywhere. My sister's friends try to be polite, and ask my opinion on the origin of species, perhaps, but after that, they drop me. I have never been invited out to dinner, and I've not talked to a man since I left college. Are all college women treated so badly here, Mary?

MAID. I don't know, miss. I never saw one before. But you're not near so awful as they said, miss.

OCT. Thank you, Mary.

MAID. If you was dressed up nicely, like other people, miss, if you'll excuse my saying so, you'd find people behaved quite different. (*OCTAVIA looks at her gown in surprise.*) And as to gentlemen, miss, I know one gentleman as is *dying* to speak to you.

OCT. Dying to speak to me! A gentleman! Who is he?

MAID (*mysteriously*). It's a secret, miss. I haven't seen him myself, only his young man, as brought the note.

OCT. What note? I have not received any.

MAID. Law, miss, here it is. I had to wait till Mrs. Warrington was out of the way. The young man was most particular you should have it when you was alone. (*Hands note.*)

OCT. (*holds it unopened*). A clandestine correspondence! What shall I do with it?

MAID. Why, read it, miss.

OCT. But it is very wrong to receive a note from a strange gentleman. The dean told me so.

MAID. Ah, miss, but he's not a stranger. He used to know Mrs. Warrington.

OCT. Oh, if he knows my sister, I can ask her all about it.

MAID. Oh, you mustn't do that, miss. Charles,—that's the young man, and a most respectable and perlite young man he is,—Charles says that his master will be *ruinated* if his friends know he is in New York.

OCT. That's very strange.

MAID. He has enemies here, and you must promise not to betray him, please, and the note will explain it *all*.

OCT. And does he tell his name? (*Opens note, reads.*) "Count Otto von Walden." Yes, I remember Evelyn's speaking of Otto von Walden. They used to be friends before he returned to Germany. Then I suppose I can read it. You may go, Mary.

MAID (*disappointed*). I'd better wait for the answer, hadn't I, miss?

OCT. Oh, is there an answer? (*Reads.*) "My dear Miss Frothingham,—I venture to address you without a formal introduction, for you have seemed a friend to me ever since I read your admirable essay in favor of Woman's Suffrage." Ah! (*Looks at bookcase; reads.*) "I am an exile from my native land, banished by my political enemies for holding opinions like your own." How interesting, Mary! (*Reads.*) "For years I have yearned in vain for sympathy. Now, my admiration breaks conventional bonds, and I perish unless I meet thee, my lofty guiding star!" This sounds like Shelley. (*Reads.*) "I watch for you at street corners: I dare not come to see you openly. My admiration must be a secret between us two, for the present. But at the Military Ball, to-night, I can move unnoticed in the crowd, and there let me meet thee, oh, my adored one!" At the ball! What does he mean? I never go to balls. I disapprove of them.

MAID. It's time you *should* go, miss. How can you tell whether you disapprove of them, if you've never been?

OCT. That is true. Balls are vanity. But I must investigate them for myself, some time. (*Reads.*) "Wear my red roses to the ball, dearest, and do not let them leave your hand. By them, I shall recognize thee from afar."

MAID. Some lovely red roses came with the note.

OCT. (*reads*). "You will know your slave by his tall figure, dark complexion, and eyes for you alone." I am glad he is dark. (*Reads.*) "Oh, my angel, do not refuse me! Let me see you sparkling with jewels and outshining all others at the ball. If I do not meet you to-night, life's weary journey will end for me! Thine till death, Count Otto von Walden."

This is the most embarrassing note I ever received. Really, this poor man writes as if he were in love, you know. It's like Romeo and Juliet. What would the dean say?

MAID. I'm sure, he's very polite.

OCT. But he writes such fervid, passionate words! And he calls me "angel." I don't think I like it.

MAID. I'm sure you do, miss.

OCT. And he is so mysterious,—and so presuming! The idea of asking me to go to the ball!

MAID. Why shouldn't you go, miss?

OCT. I haven't got any dress.

MAID. A gown of Mrs. Warrington's would fit you, miss. Just try it, and see.

OCT. No, indeed! It is impossible.

MAID. Well, I can only say, miss, I shouldn't think you'd want the gentleman's death on your hands.

OCT. What do you mean?

MAID. It will be your fault if he kills himself. You know what he said. You read it yourself. "Life's journey is going to end if you don't come to the ball."

OCT. You don't mean that he will commit suicide?

MAID. That's what he says. "Yours till death."

OCT. How dreadful! I can't allow that.

MAID. No, miss! You'll have to go to the ball.

OCT. But I don't know anybody there! It's cruel of him to ask it.

MAID. You'll be all right. He'll take care of you. And, goodness me, you've never seen his lovely red roses. 'Twould be a shame to waste 'em. I put them into water in here, miss. (*Points R.*)

OCT. I suppose I must look at them.

[*Exit R.*

MAID. There, I've fixed her! She's sure to go, now. Mrs. Warrington's dress is lying all ready on the bed. She'll be at the ball in half an hour, and I'll get my five dollars from the gent, sure enough. (*Bell rings.*) There's the door-bell! Good gracious, it must be the Baroness von Edelweis. We'd forgotten all about her. Now what'll I do? I must keep her clear of Miss Octavia. I know! I'll smuggle her up here, till Miss Octavia's out of the house.

[*Exit L.*

(*Then, ushers up* GEORGIE NAPPER, *who has a dress-suit-case. MAID has a telegram in her hand.*)

MAID. This way, if you please, ma'am. Mrs. Warrington

said I was to bring you right up here, and make you comfortable.

GEOR. (*surprised*). That so? I was expected, was I?

MAID. Oh, dear, yes, ma'am. Miss Octavia was waiting for you ever so long. But I'm afraid she's given you up, and gone out, now.

GEOR. Is anybody at home?

MAID. No, ma'am,—not just now. Is there anything I can do for you, ma'am? Will I bring you a cup of tea?

GEOR. Thanks, much. I'll just wait here till the lady comes, since you say she expected me. She didn't leave any message, I suppose? (*Looks among papers on table.*)

MAID. No, ma'am,—except "she'd be back soon." Are you looking for something, ma'am?

GEOR. I thought there might be a note lying 'round. (*Looks toward telegram.*)

MAID. For you, ma'am? No, ma'am. This is only a telegram for Mrs. Warrington. (*Puts telegram on mantel.*)

GEOR. I suppose the ladies do get notes sometimes, eh?—from gentlemen?

MAID. Oh, dear, no, ma'am,—how could you think so? Miss Octavia is a college woman.

GEOR. The devil she is! Then she's dead sure to be the one who receives secret notes from a strange gentleman. You needn't be afraid of me. Just say, didn't she get a note to-night?

MAID. No, baroness.

GEOR. (*turns on her in surprise*). See here, don't be saucy. You won't do any good by a lie, either. I know of a note that came to this house to-night. You could save me a lot of time, and do your mistress a service, if you will get that note for me. Will you?

MAID. There isn't any note, ma'am. I'd be glad to please you any way I could.

GEOR. Oh, all right! If you won't, you won't. I'll have to wait for your mistress. Guess I *will* have a cup of tea, since you're so obliging. (*Sits.*)

MAID. Certainly, baroness.

GEOR. (*aside*). Why does she call me that?

MAID (*aside; at door L.*). That's the last way I expected a baroness to look. But they do say all the Royal family of England is just such frumps. [*Exit L.*]

GEOR. (*jumps up*). Now I've got rid of *her*, I'll just look

'round for myself. (*Looks at notes on table. Opens desk, and looks over contents while she talks.*) I say, it's too bad to have my game blocked by that mule of a maid, when I've done so well up to now. There aren't many detectives on the force, that could have tracked Burglar Bill from Chicago, as I did, with nothing but his photo and his handwriting. Wish I could find that note he sent here. What's this? (*Takes telegram from mantel, and opens it skilfully.*) I think I'll take the liberty. Pshaw! Nothing about Burglar Bill! From a baroness,—the Baroness Lydia von Edelweis. (*Reads.*) "To my unknown cousins. Alas! The train is delayed. I will come to-morrow night." Unknown cousins! Stop a jiff! I have it now. What a joke! An unknown baroness cousin is expected here, when I turn up instead, and the maid naturally mistakes me for the baroness. I thought she was over-polite. I wonder if I could keep it up. I declare, I've half a mind to try. Nobody has read this telegram. (*Puts it in her pocket.*) It would be so convenient to stay here, right on the spot, and find out Bill's little game,—what name he has assumed. Perhaps I can catch him myself in this very house. I'll do it! I can play baroness for one day. What nuts it will be, when they find I am only Georgie Napper, the detective! I don't care, if I can only nab my man. (*Enter OCTAVIA R., in party gown, with college gown hanging on her arm, carrying a bunch of roses; reading the note.*) Jimminy Cricks! Here's the lady! (*Shuts desk and comes forward.*) I declare she's got a note in her hand!

OCT. Mercy! Who is this? (*Hurriedly puts on college gown over the other.*)

GEOR. (*affectedly*). Ah, you are surprised to see me. I am your baroness cousin, Lydia von—von——

OCT. You are the Baroness von Edelweis! How queer! I mean,—I am very glad to see you. Do sit down. (*They sit.*)

GEOR. Your maid brought me up here.

OCT. That's right. I was expecting you. At least, I had forgotten all about you. But never mind. Pray make yourself at home.

Enter MAID L., and stands aghast.

GEOR. She said you were out.

OCT. Oh, no! Mary was mistaken. I never go out.

MAID. I'm sure, Miss Octavia, I thought you were gone.

I heard the carriage drive up. It is getting so late, the ball will be nearly over, if you don't hurry.

GEOR. Oh,—are you going to a ball?

OCT. No, indeed. I never go to balls. Evelyn must have told you that I am a college woman.

GEOR. Oh, yes. (*Aside.*) I don't think! (*Aloud.*) Where is the ball?

OCT. Nowhere. I never intended to go at all, really. And now, of course, I shall stay at home, with you.

MAID (*to OCTAVIA; aside*). You'll never give up the ball, miss! Suppose the gentleman should be killing his-self! (*Aloud.*) Perhaps the baroness is tired, and would be glad to be left alone, and have some supper in her room.

OCT. (*eagerly*). To be sure! How thoughtless I am! You must be tired, after your journey. Don't let me keep you up. Why don't you let your maid unpack, and help you right to bed?

GEOR. My maid! Oh, my maid and my baggage will be here later. I'm not at all tired, thanks, only very glad to see my dear cousin. (*Embraces OCTAVIA, and tries to reach note, which OCTAVIA puts behind her back.*) What lovely flowers, my dear! Who sent them?

OCT. Nobody. At least, nobody in particular.

GEOR. Bet they're from the same gentleman who wrote that note. What did he want, Mary? Was she going to the ball with him, if I hadn't turned up?

OCT. No, baroness, believe me. I never took it into consideration. He only asked me to wear the flowers *in case* I should go.

GEOR. Oh, is that all? He is generally more pressing than that.

OCT. What do you mean? Do you know him?

GEOR. Know him? I should think I did! Bet I know a great deal more about him than you do.

OCT. Really! And you knew he was in New York? He said nobody knew it.

GEOR. Nobody does, but me and you.

OCT. Then you know his secrets?

GEOR. All of them.

OCT. Oh, how fortunate! Then there can't be any harm in my showing you this note, and you can advise me. I am so puzzled and worried! (*Gives note.*)

GEOR. The dear, familiar writing! My old friend Count

Otto von Walden. (*Aside.*) So, that's the name Burglar Bill has assumed! (*Reads note; front.*)

OCT. You, who know him so well, can tell me if he's really likely to do it,—in case I refuse to come. You see what he says. Do you think he will really commit suicide?

GEOR. (*hurriedly finishing note*). Not a doubt of it, my dear. He always does! You'd better not keep him waiting. Come, take off that old thing. You're all dressed, and ready for the ball. (*Takes off college gown.*)

OCT. I can't go like this. You don't know how queer I feel.

MAID. You look lovely, miss.

GEOR. Don't stop to talk. Here, take your flowers, and come on! (*MAID and GEORGIE wrap her up.*) Hurry! We may be too late.

OCT. Why, where are *you* going?

GEOR. Oh, I'm going along to help you.

OCT. No, no! You are very kind, but I won't trouble you.

GEOR. No trouble—I should like to go. I shouldn't mind catching a glimpse of Count Otto von Walden, myself.

OCT. But you're not dressed for a ball!

GEOR. My dear, it doesn't matter a bit how I'm dressed. The important point is not to lose an instant, if we want to catch your Count Otto von Walden. Come, take a brace! There you go! (*Exit OCTAVIA, hurried out by MAID.*) Hurrah! I'm on his track, at last.

CURTAIN.

ACT II

SCENE.—*Alcove of a ballroom. Waltz played in wings. Window-seat at back, with window looking into ballroom, and heads and shoulders of couples dancing by. Sofa R. Table, with punch-bowl and glasses L. OCTAVIA sitting on window-seat; GEORGIE dancing by herself, or with chair at front.*

OCT. I'm sorry I don't know any one to introduce to you, baroness. If I could only see my sister,—she knows everybody.

GEOR. Oh, never mind me! It's funny your count makes himself so scarce. You ought to move about, as I do, and let him see you're here.

OCT. Oh, no, I couldn't, all alone. Oh, why doesn't he come?

Enter SERVANT, with note.

SERV. (to GEORGIE). I was looking for a lady with a big bokay of red roses.

GEOR. There's the big red bokay. What do you want?

SERV. (to OCTAVIA). A note for you, ma'am.

(*Gives note to OCTAVIA, and exit L. OCTAVIA comes to front. GEORGIE peeks over her shoulder.*)

OCT. From him!

GEOR. (*aside*). Bill's writing, again! He's a great one for notes. Why don't he show himself?

OCT. (*on sofa*). Excuse me, baroness. It is marked "strictly private."

GEOR. (*disappointed*). That so? Well, don't mind me. (*Aside.*) Guess I'll have a look, then. Lucky I've practiced reading backwards. (*Produces hand-mirror from her pocket, stands back to, behind OCTAVIA, behind sofa, and reads aloud.*) "Adored one! I see you, but cannot speak to you, yet. Every movement is watched by my political enemies." Jimminy Cricks! Has he caught on to my watching for him? "If fate throws us together, do not betray that you ever heard my

name. But do not desert me, I implore you. Wait an hour, and I can make everything plain. Thine, Otto." (*Comes to front.*) It is just possible he has spotted me as a detective. My! but he's a sharp one. It's best to clear out, just now. (*Creeps softly out R.*)

OCT. (*reads*). "If fate throws us together, do not betray that you ever heard my name. Wait for me an hour." An hour more, all alone, while any moment something dreadful may be happening to him! Oh! I can't bear the suspense. (*Weeps into handkerchief.*)

Enter MRS. WARRINGTON, *hurriedly*, L.

MRS. W. (*speaking to some one outside*). Excuse me, one moment. (*To* OCTAVIA.) Octavia Frothingham! What in the world are you doing here? I saw you sitting all alone, way across the room. What *could* make you come alone? You don't know a soul!—and I was just bringing my partner over to you, in the greatest haste, when I saw you were *crying*, you goosie! What has happened? Do try to stop! I'm sure people are looking. There, now you are all right, I'll call him in. It will never do for my sister to be seen sitting all alone. Mind you talk nicely to him,—a dear boy! Just back from Germany, to-day! You've heard me speak of him. Count Otto von Walden!

OCT. (*screams*). No! No! I can't meet him.

MRS. W. What is the matter? Do you know him?

OCT. No! Oh, no, indeed!

MRS. W. Then what are you screaming at? (*A short pause.*) Octavia Frothingham, if you are such a baby that you are afraid to meet a man, I've nothing more to say to you.

[*Exit* MRS. WARRINGTON L.]

OCT. Stop, Evelyn! Come back! She's gone. Oh, what shall I do? If I speak to him, I shall betray him to his enemies. But if I go away he will kill himself. Stay! There is but one way. I must be calm, and cold, and meet him as if we were utter strangers. (*Rises, drops flowers, and goes to door L.*) Here they come. Why, he told me he was tall and dark and handsome; and he's nothing but a light-haired boy. Can this be my Otto?

Enter MRS. WARRINGTON, L., *just inside door.*

MRS. W. Octavia, this is Count Otto von Walden. And this is my sister Octavia, Otto. You must be good friends.

Now, I'm sure she would like to see the conservatories. (OCTAVIA *bows coldly*.) [Exit OCTAVIA, L.]

Enter MRS. CUMMINGS, R., *who shakes hands with* MRS. WARRINGTON.

MRS. W. How do you do, my dear? Let's sit down here together, and have a nice little talk. You and I are getting too old for this kind of thing, my dear. In fact, I should not think of coming, if it wasn't for Jack. He is so frivolous!

(*They sit.* MRS. WARRINGTON *picks up* OCTAVIA'S *flowers*.)

MRS. C. Where is Jack, by the way? I haven't seen him.

MRS. W. (*aside*). He can't have danced with her. (*Aloud*.) He's better than I could ask,—that is to say, he is so busy, and tired, and it makes it very embarrassing,—but then, he never dances at these crowded places, not even with me.

MRS. C. Ah, you could hardly expect that, my dear; he enjoys the conservatories, where the young girls are.

MRS. W. (*forcing a smile*). Speaking of conservatories, do you know of a good washerwoman?

MRS. C. No, but Mrs. Lyman does. Did you hear about her diamonds being stolen?

MRS. W. (*enthusiastically*). No! How?

MRS. C. Why, at the ball last night. She had been dancing all the evening, and when she reached the dressing-room, her diamonds were gone! So they must have been taken by some one at the ball. But the strange part of it was that she knew every gentleman in the room!

MRS. W. Why, it's just like the "Social Highwayman"! You've read it? Perhaps it will turn out in the same way. He shot himself, or something, when his wife died,—no, his mother,—and all before the friends he had been robbing, and the girl he was engaged to. He robbed her, afterward. Dreadful, wasn't it? And very like this case! If I were Mrs. Lyman, I should keep it secret, and not let it spread.

Enter SERVANT, L., *with note*.

SERV. (*aside*). There's the very same big, red bokay. (To MRS. WARRINGTON; *aloud*.) A note for you, ma'am.

[Exit SERVANT, L.]

MRS. W. For me! (*Crosses to centre*.) Who can it be from? From Jack, probably. Only, what could he have to

write about? Perhaps he thinks I ought to be dancing, but I shall tell him that I am quite too old and tired. And if he wants me to dance, why doesn't he ask me himself? It's really unkind of him!

MRS. C. Are you sure that's what he means?

MRS. W. Oh, I'm sure, but I may as well look. (*Lays down flowers and opens note.*) Why it's not Jack's hand! Who can he have asked to write for him? (*Reads.*) "Dearest: Come and meet me at once at the Metropolitan station. No time to explain. I must tell you all there. Forgive me, —only *come!* It is a matter of life and death!" Why, how strange! Something must have happened. I hope it's not a duel, or a gambling debt! To be sure, Jack doesn't gamble! Good-bye, my dear,—I am so worried, and flurried,—you'll pour at my tea to-morrow, to meet my cousin, the Baroness von Edelweis, you know? You will be charmed with her, my dear. She's so companionable, and very handsome. The classical style, you know, lofty and reserved. And money, my dear, she's *rolling* in money! I believe she is very intellectual, and I have been reading all kinds of scientific books, so as to make a good impression on her.

MRS. C. Why, haven't you ever met her?

MRS. W. No, my dear. Just think, how romantic! We expect her to-night. By the way, I wonder where she is! Octavia was to stay at home, to receive her.

MRS. C. But Octavia is here. How did you persuade her to come? I thought she hated society!

MRS. W. She does,—but I suppose on account of the baroness she had to come to-night,—but I wonder what she's done with her!

MRS. C. Perhaps Jack has sent for you to meet the baroness at the station.

MRS. W. That's it! I've a great mind not to go! But perhaps she has broken her leg, and he wants to leave me with her while he goes for the doctor. Poor thing! You don't mind my hurrying off?

MRS. C. Oh, not at all, my dear. (*Exit* MRS. WARRINGTON, L.) Here comes Octavia Frothingham, now, with that little German count Evelyn Warrington has picked up. I wonder if she will introduce him. Evelyn tries to keep him to herself.

Enter OCTAVIA; *speaks to some one outside* L.

OCT. Yes, thank you very much. It's awfully kind of you. I should be glad to go home, now. If you will order the carriage, I will wait here till you come back.

[*Exit MRS. CUMMINGS, disappointed, R.*

Enter GEORGIE, R.

GEOR. Hullo, my dear! Here I am again! Met your count, yet? Funny I can't see him anywhere. Whew! What did you let go your flowers for? Don't you remember? It was by the red roses that he was to know you.

OCT. Oh, my flowers! I hope he did not think I scorned them.

GEOR. There! Don't drop them again.

(*MRS. WARRINGTON enters, and stands aghast, as GEORGIE gives OCTAVIA a slap on the back.*)

MRS. W. Who is this person?

OCT. The baroness, Evelyn! Cousin Lydia, my sister, Mrs. Warrington. (R.)

MRS. W. (*taken aback*). Cousin Lydia! How delighted I am to see you! This is better than I expected. I can only regret that I was not at home to receive you myself. (*Very suavely.*) And where did you leave the baron?

GEOR. (*aside*). Oh, good gracious! Have I got a husband? (*Aloud.*) The baron? Oh, it was impossible to bring him, you know. (R.)

MRS. W. To bring him — Oh, yes, I suppose he could hardly leave his young wife. Did they come far with you?

GEOR. Only to New York.

MRS. W. What, that long voyage across? What devotion, my dear cousin! And why can't they come and see us? Do they stay long?

GEOR. They return to-night.

(*They sit on sofa R. OCTAVIA wanders about, restlessly, and keeps looking out of door, L.*)

MRS. W. Dear me, how devoted you Germans are! Two long voyages, just for one night in New York! And how are all our relations across the sea?

GEOR. Much the same, cousin, thank you.

MRS. W. Your mother —

GEOR. Finely, thanks.

MRS. W. Is she still living, then? We saw her death announced. But papers are so inexact!

GEOR. Ah, you are quite right. I thought it was my mother-in-law you spoke of.

MRS. W. Dear me, how strange! I don't think you ever mentioned her to me. Does she live with you?

GEOR. She has no one home. Her son, you know, my — (*Aside.*) Have I got a husband, or not, anyway? (*Takes out handkerchief; aloud.*) You must excuse me. The circumstances are painful —

MRS. W. Ah, forgive me, dear cousin! (*Takes her hand.*) And how are—are—*politics* there?

GEOR. Oh, very much mixed. It has been dreadfully exciting. No one fully understands the state of affairs but myself.

MRS. W. How very interesting, baroness! (*Yawns.*) You must explain it all to me. I am very fond of politics, but I have not often so intelligent an instructor. To-morrow, when you are rested. (*Rises.*)

GEOR. Thanks, I am not at all tired, and in an hour or two I dare say I can make you understand. It is, as you say, very interesting.

MRS. W. So kind, baroness! - (*Crosses to OCTAVIA, L.*) Octavia, you and Cousin Lydia will be twin souls. (*Aside; to OCTAVIA.*) Talk to her a little while—I am so sleepy; I can't think of anything to say. (*Looking at note in her hand; aloud.*) Speaking of *notes*, my dear cousin —

GEOR. Good work! Get a gait on! Excuse me, dear cousin,—I see by your face that I used an unusual word. I got it from my guide-book. But they are so unreliable! You must help me.

MRS. W. Certainly, baroness. But any expression you use, baroness, is correct.

GEOR. Thanks. Go ahead.

(GEORGIE and MRS. WARRINGTON *sit on sofa.*)

MRS. W. I was going to tell you of an adventure I had to-night. It is nothing, but it will pass the time,—I mean—at least, it will amuse you. No, not amuse,—but —

GEOR. Oh, certainly!

MRS. W. Well, I was sitting on this sofa, talking with a friend, about—I forget what, exactly. I shouldn't wonder if it was Jack! No, let me see! We had both been preserving

fruit, and —— Oh, there is a reduction in winter coats, at Stearns's, Octavia!

GEOR. And did anything happen?

MRS. W. When? Oh, yes, as I was saying, a note was handed to me.

GEOR. A note?

MRS. W. Yes. Strangely enough, it was not addressed, but the maid assured me that it was for me. I thought it was from Jack, but now I believe it was all a mistake. I did not notice at the time, but it is signed "O. von W." The note was for some one else, I think, because Jack wasn't at the station—And—why, you are here! Or, did Jack meet you there?

GEOR. Me? No! No one met me at the station.

MRS. W. Why, how dreadful! But it was all a mistake, I assure you.

GEOR. But, the note?

MRS. W. Yes, indeed, the note,—here it is. No wonder I thought Jack was a little off, as usual.

GEOR. (*reads note*). Ah, I see how it was! You were holding Octavia's flowers! (R.)

MRS. W. What did you say, Cousin Lydia? (C.)

GEOR. Nothing. (*Aside; to OCTAVIA.*) Note meant for you, of course.

OCT. (*takes note*). Oh! (*Aside; L.*) Count Otto's writing! (*Reads aloud.*) "Meet me at the Metropolitan station. It is a matter of life and death." (*Aside.*) He must be waiting there for me. I hope there is time to prevent his doing anything desperate. [*Exit OCTAVIA, L., running.*]

MRS. W. I don't wonder you are surprised. I was. I knew Jack was dead, or he'd never send for me in such a way, so I hurried to the station, and no Jack was there,—no one but a tall, dark, foreign looking man who glared at me, and paced, impatiently, up and down.

GEOR. (*aside; rises*). That's my man, sure pop! (*Aloud.*) And then?

MRS. W. Then I came back.

GEOR. And the man,—the foreigner?

MRS. W. I don't know, I'm sure. I think he was waiting for somebody.

GEOR. Yes, I rather think he was! (*Aside.*) Perhaps there is time to catch him! (*Aloud.*) Excuse me! I must run and help your sister. [*Exit GEORGIE L., running.*]

MRS. W. (*rising*). Where have they gone? Octavia must

have fainted ! Octavia ! No. I've got it ! I noticed the baroness was agitated ! It must be that ! I guessed it,—all along ! This foreigner I saw at the station just now,—he really looked very like a German,—he is some old lover of the baroness's, and has followed her to New York and doesn't know where to find her ! Poor fellow ! I might have helped him, if he'd asked me. He must have just arrived at the station, and the baroness was so agitated to hear of it, she ran to meet him ! I wonder if he's still there !

Enter SERVANT L.

SERV. There's a gentleman waiting for Miss Frothingham, Mrs. Warrington. He says she asked him to order her carriage, as she wanted to go home.

MRS. W. Octavia going home with a gentleman ! Who is he ?

SERV. Count Otto von Walden.

MRS. W. What, my little Otto ? Well, well, my old friend. But,—sly girl ! Who would have suspected it of her ?

SERV. Do you know where I can find her, Mrs. Warrington ?

MRS. W. I dare say she may be in the dressing-room. She was fainting, I believe—no, that was the baroness, wasn't it ? Tell Miss Octavia to go right home with him, in my carriage. I don't mind waiting at all. (*Exit SERVANT, L.*) I won't spoil a *tête-à-tête*. I never knew Octavia to do such a thing before, but nothing could please me better. Otto is the dearest boy, and if Octavia marries him, she will do just what he tells her to, and he will break her of her studious habits. I never could manage her. These superior girls, when they are caught at last, make slaves of themselves,—perfect slaves ! Yes, Otto is just the man for Octavia. I will invite him to call to-morrow.

Reënter SERVANT, L.

SERV. I can't find Miss Frothingham, ma'am, and here's another gentleman hunting for her in the greatest hurry.

MRS. W. Another gentleman ! Are you sure ? Do you know who it is ?

SERV. No, ma'am. I knew the first gentleman very well, but this one I never saw before. He's very queer, Mrs. Warrington, and he won't come in to the light, but he's standing at the hall door, all muffled up.

MRS. W. What, a foreign looking man, tall, and dark, and thin? I'll just peek! (*Goes to door L.*) Yes, it's the very man I saw at the station. I wonder if he recognizes me. (*Bows.*) Show him right in. (*Exit SERVANT, L.*) I know what he has come for. Of course, he's hunting for the baroness. How lucky I saw him! I'll keep him till she returns, and how grateful she will be! She will think she has lost him, but I will go to meet her, alone, and break it to her. I will say, "Dear baroness, be calm! He is not dead. He lives, and loves you as devotedly as ever, for he came here directly from the station. For your sake, I welcomed him with open arms." I wonder why he does not come in. What shall I say to him? A stranger and a foreigner. I wonder if he talks English! How mysterious, and romantic! I don't even know his name!

Reënter SERVANT, L.

SERV. The gentleman has disappeared, ma'am! By the time I reached the door, he was gone, out of sight, entirely. Not a sign of him, anywhere!

MRS. W. Gone! Run and stop him! Hurry! Fly! Tell him, the baroness will be here directly. (*Exit SERVANT L.*) Gone! How ungrateful! I was going to help him. Gone! Oh, poor baroness! She has missed him again! I'm afraid it will break her heart.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Afternoon tea at MRS. WARRINGTON'S. A buzz of voices, as the curtain goes up. Sofa L., front. Tea-table, R. MRS. WARRINGTON and GEORGIE, receiving, R. Ladies come and go at L. MRS. CUMMINGS, pouring. OCTAVIA wanders about, absent-mindedly.*

(GEORGIE comes front, with MRS. GREEN and OCTAVIA.)

MRS. G. (to OCTAVIA). I shall not dare to ask you to my little dinner, Miss Frothingham, for I know you despise such frivolities.

OCT. (*eagerly*). Oh, not at all, I assure you.

MRS. G. Don't apologize! It's perfectly natural. In fact, I sympathize with you, for I am a little literary myself, though only in an amateur way. I enjoy reading so much, especially science. I can't blame you for preferring to remain at home, with your books. (OCTAVIA sits, forlorn, on sofa. To GEORGIE.) But, baroness, I hope I may have the great honor and felicity of your company, to-morrow night?

GEOR. (*exaggeratedly polite*). Oh, I'll come, bet your life! There's nothing I like so well as dinners, if the grub is good. I get them seldom enough.

MRS. G. I am sure, baroness, you have the reputation of going to dinners every day.

GEOR. Have I? Depends on what you call a dinner.

MRS. G. I am afraid you are very particular, baroness. You must come to me with indulgence, or I shall regret my presumption.

GEOR. Oh, that's all right. By the way, have some chocolate? It's way up, I can tell you. I always pitch into the grub when I get a chance.

(*Goes to table. Sits with feet upon a chair. Eats a great deal, as she talks.*)

MRS. G. (*to friend*). How charming and unaffected she is!

GEOR. The last dinner I was at, was after the capture of Jim Hackett, of Chicago. He was a terror! He'd murdered

the cashier, you know, and made off to Canada with half a million of dollars. You must have read it in the papers. His capture was one of the slickest jobs of the year. I would have given my ears to have done it myself. Anyhow, you bet we had a dinner that night, way up to G! Oysters, ducks, and champagne—makes your mouth water to think of. I've been starved, ever since!

(Continues to eat a great deal, and talks with the ladies.

MRS. CUMMINGS rises and comes front, trying not to be seen laughing. MRS. GREEN comes up to her.)

MRS. C. Well, my dear, what do you think of the baroness?

MRS. G. Oh, she's charming, my dear. So foreign!

(GEORGIE shakes hands with one of the guests. The guests begin to depart, while MRS. CUMMINGS and MRS. GREEN talk.)

MRS. C. Do you call it foreign? Watch her shake hands. Such manners! You would call her ill-bred, if she hadn't a a title!

MRS. G. My dear Mrs. Cummings! A baroness ill-bred!

MRS. C. And then, such slang!

MRS. G. How can she help talking broken English, my dear? She has never been here before.

MRS. C. Never been here before? Really! Then, how does she happen to be so very familiar with American crimes and criminals? She seems to know about all the burglars in the country.

MRS. G. My dear, she is interested in America. I heard her say so. You may be sure she's all right. She is Mrs. Warrington's cousin, and — Well, she may be different from what you expect, but *any* German baroness would be. I found her very delightful.

MRS. C. And so did I. I like to see people make fools of themselves!

MRS. G. My dear!

MRS. C. Here she is. *(GEORGIE joins them. OCTAVIA goes back to tea-table, and takes a cup. Exit MRS. WARRINGTON, with last guest.)* We were just speaking of you, baroness.

GEOR. Good, I hope. *(Takes MRS. CUMMINGS'S button-hole, and speaks so that OCTAVIA cannot hear.)* Say, do you know a certain Count Otto von Walden?

MRS. C. I can't say that I have been permitted that pleasure. But Octavia seems to know him pretty well. Are they engaged?

GEOR. Engaged! Oh, come off!

MRS. C. Of course, you know best, baroness. You are one of the family.

GEOR. Oh, I? Yes, of course. But I haven't been here long enough to investigate much, worse luck. There are so many people 'round, all the time.

MRS. G. I fear we overstay our welcome, baroness. We do not wish to presume on your kindness. It has been *so* enjoyable! Good-bye.

GEOR. (*takes her hand*). Oh, say! I didn't mean that, you know. You must forgive my bad English. I am afraid you can hardly understand it.

MRS. C. On the contrary, baroness, it is most expressive. I wonder how you could learn such beautiful English in so short a time. I hear this is your first visit.

GEOR. Oh, I had a teacher, of course. (*Aside.*) I hate that woman. (*To MRS. GREEN.*) Say, don't go, quite yet. Just have one more cup of tea. Won't? Well, then, let me see you off.

[*Exeunt GEORGIE and MRS. GREEN, arm in arm, L.*]

(*MRS. CUMMINGS, coming up behind, at the tea-table, puts her hand on OCTAVIA'S shoulder.*)

MRS. C. What are you thinking about, all alone, Miss Frothingham? Am I disturbing some great thought?

OCT. Mrs. Cummings! Won't you—won't you have some tea?

MRS. C. Thank you, no. I have been pouring, all the afternoon. I thought I'd come and speak to you, as you did not seem to see me. (*They come forward and sit together, on sofa.*) How nice of you to condescend to go to the ball last night. I heard you hated balls.

OCT. I have never been to one before.

MRS. C. Really! Was this your first appearance? How you must have enjoyed it; didn't you?

OCT. It was very pretty. I know so few people!

MRS. C. That always makes it pleasant, of course—quality rather than quantity. But your sister knows every one. Did she introduce some very charming man,—ah! How you blush! You really looked extremely well, last night. Such a

pretty gown! Evelyn had one like it, I remember, last year.

OCT. We often dress alike.

MRS. C. Ah, I see this was not your *first* ball, as you had a gown last year. I always suspect the innocence of you college women. You seemed to find *one* partner pleasant enough, in the conservatory. Don't pretend that you can't remember. You acted as if you were old friends, you and Count Otto von Walden.

OCT. Count Otto? Oh, no. I hardly know him at all. (*Rises.*)

MRS. C. Ah, I've hit the nail on the head! Don't tell *me* you hardly know him.

OCT. Upon my word, I never met him till last night.

MRS. C. Never till last night! You made up for lost time, then. I saw him myself, with his innocent blue eyes fixed most tenderly on you.

OCT. Mrs. Cummings, believe me, you are mistaken. We are almost strangers.

MRS. C. Why, this is more serious than I thought. Come, sit down, dear, and tell me about this flirtation of yours.

OCT. No, no, you must excuse me. (*Going.*)

Enter MAID, L.

MAID (*to OCTAVIA*). Here's a gentleman to see you, miss.

OCT. A gentleman! Who is it?

MAID. I forget his name. He used to come to see Mrs. Warrington.

OCT. Hush! You mean a young, light haired man?

MAID. Yes, miss. Mrs. Warrington used to call him "Otto."

MRS. C. "Otto"! Oho! This grows more and more interesting. Bring "Otto" right in here. Don't mind me.

OCT. Mrs. Cummings, I shall be much obliged to you if you will not meddle with my affairs. I have explained to you that I am but slightly acquainted with Count Otto von Walden, and that in a most platonic fashion. (*To MAID.*) Where is the gentleman?

MAID. In the small reception room. (*Points R.*)

OCT. (*aside; to MAID*). Did any of the ladies see him come?

MAID. No, miss.

[*Exit OCTAVIA, R.*]

(MAID *shuts door for her, and begins to clear up tea-table.*)

MRS. C. What fools these college women make of themselves !

Enter MRS. WARRINGTON ; *comes down stage.*

MRS. C. What a belle your clever sister is, Evelyn.

MRS. W. Why, where is she ?

MRS. C. Her partner of last night has just called in a most platonic fashion. (*Enter* GEORGIE.) Ah, baroness !

MRS. W. (*to* MAID ; *aside*). Little, and light colored ?

MAID. Law, ma'am ! What ?

MRS. W. What did you do with him ?

MAID. Who, ma'am ?

MRS. W. Oh, they are in the reception-room, of course.

MAID. Oh, yes, ma'am. Miss Octavia is there with the little, fair gentleman, who used to come to see you.

MRS. W. (*aside*). Good ! It's Otto, just as I suspected. How sweet it will sound ! A college woman—yet a happy wife !

MRS. C. (*aside*). There's no hope of seeing any men, now. I might as well go. (*Shaking hands with* MRS. WARRINGTON ; *aloud.*) Such a delightful afternoon ! The baroness is charming, my dear. [*Exeunt* MRS. CUMMINGS, and MAID, L.]

(MRS. WARRINGTON and GEORGIE, *alone.*)

MRS. W. At last, we are alone. I have been trying, all day, baroness, to speak to you when no one was by. (R.)

GEOR. Yes, I was afraid so. (L.)

MRS. W. There is something very peculiar—at least curious—— Well, perhaps not that, but at all events, interesting——

GEOR. Say it out ! I can stand it.

MRS. W. But I wanted to tell you alone, for fear of your embarrassment before Octavia. Ah, I have found you out !

GEOR. That so ? Then the least said, the better, I suppose. Knew it had got to come out before long. How much do you know ?

MRS. W. Know ? Nothing. But (*mysteriously*) some one called for you at the ballroom, last night, and did not give any name. And now, baroness, I am dying of curiosity. Tell me, who is he ?

(*Runs to door R., and locks it.*)

MRS. W. What are you doing?

GEOR. I've got him! Locked him in! It's all serene. And now, you go for the police, Mrs. Warrington, and I'll keep guard. Have you got a pistol?

MRS. W. What? What's the matter? Fire! Murder! Thieves!

GEOR. Shut up! Keep still, do, for goodness' sake. He'll hear you!

MRS. W. Who?

GEOR. Who? Why, the biggest villain, gambler, thief, burglar, in America! He's worth a million to catch, and I've done it! My name will be in all the papers, and in big type, at that!

MRS. W. Goodness gracious! How did he get into the house?

GEOR. Why, he's been making love to your sister; he wanted to marry her and get her money, and he's been masquerading as Count Otto von Walden, and going to all your balls.

MRS. W. Otto! Oh, I can't believe it. It's too awful! A burglar, and a thief!

GEOR. And gambler,—and forger,—and a stunning actor. Oh, this is nothing to what he can do!

MRS. W. Oh, it's too dreadful! And to think that I encouraged Octavia!

GEOR. Don't stop to cry, now, but help me catch him. (*Writes at table.*)

(MRS. WARRINGTON *bustles around, and finds a piece of string.*)

MRS. W. (*in a loud whisper*). Can we tie him to a chair?

GEOR. Chair? No! Send for the police, quick! Here's a note to the captain. (*Rings bell. Enter MAID, L., GEORGIE gives her note; to MAID.*) Send that over to the police station. Look sharp!

[*Exit MAID, L.*]

MRS. W. How clever you are, baroness!

GEOR. Baroness! Ha-ha! I guess there ain't many baronesses as smart as me! I'm just going to peek at him through the keyhole. Don't want to scare him till the police get here. (*Goes to door R.*)

MRS. W. Stop! Octavia's in there. I can't have her

GEOR. Who is who? Hanged if I know where you're driving at! (*Rises; aside.*) She still calls me "baroness"! She don't suspect me! (*Aloud.*) My dear cousin, I shall have to ask you to explain. Some one came to see me? At the ball?

MRS. W. Ah, sly one! The very same man.

GEOR. Same as who?

MRS. W. Why, the foreigner I saw at the station, waiting for you.

GEOR. Waiting for me?

MRS. W. Yes. At least, he did not say anything, but I knew what he wanted. And then he came to the ball, immediately after you had run to meet him at the station. So my suspicions were aroused, and I guessed it all. I wish I could have kept him, but before I could reach the door he had left.

GEOR. Do you mean to say that the foreigner you saw at the station came to the ball and asked for me?

MRS. W. Well, the servant thought he asked for Octavia, but, of course, I knew he meant you. Octavia knows none but my friends.

GEOR. But he came back to the ball? Oh, hang it! Why wasn't I there? Oh, I'm lost! It's all up!

MRS. W. I am so sorry, baroness. Was he a dear friend?

GEOR. Friend! It's a good deal better than that! To have come so near it, and failed! What a fool I was to leave the ball. Well, I've lost that chance.

(GEORGIE sits in chair, chin on her hands.)

MRS. W. I can't bear to see you so distressed, dear baroness. Tell me about him. What is his name? Have you known him long?

GEOR. He and I have been playing hare and hounds, just this way, for months!

MRS. W. How romantic! I must bring you together. I love affairs of this kind. Octavia is no comfort to me, at all. She has no soul for romance.

GEOR. By the way, where is Octavia?

MRS. W. She is engaged, just now, there in the back parlor, with Count Otto von Walden. (*Points to R. entrance.*)

GEOR. Count Otto von Walden! There? Now? You don't mean it! Why didn't you tell me so, before? Jimminy Cricks!

disturbed. Oh, I forgot! He's only a villain! (GEORGIE *kneels at door*, R.) What shall I do? How can I tell Octavia? It will break her heart. (GEORGIE *rises, aghast*.)

GEOR. *Who* did you say was in there?

MRS. W. Octavia, poor child! How can we get her out? Suppose he used his pistols!

GEOR. Oh, do shut up! Quick, who's the man? Here, peek through the keyhole. That light-haired fellow.

(MRS. WARRINGTON *kneels down, and peeks*.)

MRS. W. Oh, dear! He's holding her hand! Oh, how can I tell her?

GEOR. Do you call *him* Count Otto von Walden?

MRS. W. Yes, dear me, of course, it's my dear little Otto. So young, and innocent seeming!

GEOR. Are you cock sure his name is Count Otto von Walden?

MRS. W. Why, of course! I've known him as a boy.

GEOR. I'm sold again, then. There must be two Count Otto von Waldens!

MRS. W. Two? Why? I don't understand.

GEOR. I tell you, it's just one of Bill's old tricks, to take another man's name, behind his back. Here, I'll give you the key. You can let the little fellow out.

MRS. W. Let him loose? He might kill us!

GEOR. That boy? He's harmless enough. I was looking for another Count Otto von Walden, and got left, that's all.

MRS. W. Another! How strange! Why will not this one do?

GEOR. Because he hasn't committed any crime, worse luck! It's the other one who has done all the mischief I told you of,—stealing money and jewels from all you fine people. Well, let's take a fresh start. The question is, where is he, now?

MRS. W. Who?

GEOR. Oh, the foreign gentleman you saw at the station. My friend, you know!

MRS. W. Oh, dear baroness! In my alarm, I had completely forgotten him. How thoughtless of me!

GEOR. He's escaped me so many times. I can't afford to miss him again. (*Puts on hat*.)

MRS. W. No, indeed! How eager you must be to see him! (*Rises*.) But, baroness, suppose, while you were out,

he should come to this house! Then you would miss him, just as you did at the ball.

GEOR. I declare, I believe you're right! He's a fellow who never gives up, and if he's still in town, I believe he will come here for one more try. Guess I'll stay and keep watch for him.

MRS. W. (*delighted*). If you go into that little room off the hall, baroness, you will be quite unobserved. No one ever goes in there.

GEOR. That's so! You're a brick! I say, it's a pity you're not on the force, Mrs. Warrington; the door of that little room has got a bully lock on it. I tried it.

MRS. W. (*shocked*). Oh, baroness, I assure you, you shall not be disturbed. (*Exit GEORGIE, L.*) This is the most romantic situation I was ever in! Two *tête-à-tête* in the house, one upstairs, and one down. (*Points up and down.*) If only there weren't so many burglars around, we should be very snug and comfortable. Dear me! I hope there isn't one in the house now! (*Rises, agitated; looks under table.*)

Enter OCTAVIA, R.

OCT. Oh, Evelyn, dear! I'm so happy! Otto and I —

MRS. W. Let me see. *He's* not a burglar! I'm so glad!

OCT. A burglar! What *do* you mean?

MRS. W. Oh, nothing. Only something the baroness was telling me about another man. She was going to shoot Otto, instead!

OCT. Evelyn! Are you crazy? Why should she shoot anybody?

MRS. W. It's her kindness of heart, my dear. He was the worst burglar, murderer, and actor, in the country, and she mistook him for Otto.

OCT. For Otto! How could she? Otto, the bravest, the noblest man in the world! Oh, Evelyn, I have so much to tell you! But, my dear, Otto is waiting all this time. He wants you to congratulate us. Shall I call him in?

[*Exit OCTAVIA, R.*

MRS. W. Of course, dear. I am so surprised! I never should have suspected it! (*Aside.*) I knew they were made for each other!

(*Goes to door R., with hand extended, as if to shake hands.*)

Enter GEORGIE, L., *dancing wildly.*

GEOR. Whoop-ee-ee-ee ! I've got him, at last !

(*She twirls* MRS. WARRINGTON *around.*)

MRS. W. Has your friend really come, baroness ? I'm so glad !

GEOR. He's come, fast enough, just as I thought he would. I waited, like a cat for a mouse. The minute he was inside the door, I whipped out and locked him in, gave my whistle,—in came the policeman outside,—and the trick, was done ! He's in prison by this time. It was I that caught Burglar Bill, and you bet we'll have mince pie for dinner !

MRS. W. Was there really a burglar in the house ? And have *you* caught him, baroness ? How can I ever thank you ?

GEOR. Oh, that's all right.

MRS. W. (*taking her hand.*) You are the bravest woman I ever saw, baroness. I was scared to death, but you courageously thrust aside your fear and your pride, and saved our lives.

GEOR. Oh, I say, Mrs. Warrington !

MRS. W. Don't say a word, baroness. You are a heroine ! I had no idea foreign women were so splendid. Are all baronesses like you ?

GEOR. Baronesses like me ? Well, I guess not exactly. That reminds me, I must be going. It's time for the real baroness to be coming !

MRS. W. The real baroness ? What baroness ?

GEOR. Well, it's such a joke, I'll have to tell you. I'm not the Baroness von Edelweis ! I'm a private detective !

MRS. W. You ! A detective !

GEOR. Yes ! Sent on here to shadow Burglar Bill, who called himself Count Otto von Walden, you know, and was running after Octavia.

MRS. W. But Octavia introduced you to me as the baroness !

GEOR. Yes. It was this way. I came to the house to inquire for a note Bill had sent to Octavia. When I rang your bell, last night, your maid hauled me upstairs in a great hurry, before I could say a word. She kept calling me "baroness." I didn't catch on, at first, until I found the telegram saying

the baroness would not come till to-night. Here it is. (*Hands telegram.*) I slipped into the baroness's shoes, you see!

MRS. W. You!

GEOR. So as to stay on the spot, and block Burglar Bill's game, when he made love to Octavia.

(MRS. WARRINGTON *reads telegram, and drops into chair.*)

MRS. W. Oh, what shall I do?

GEOR. Oh, don't be worried! Octavia's safe, thanks to me!

MRS. W. And all my friends were introduced to you as the baroness! Oh! What will Mrs. Cummings say?

GEOR. Yes, I fancy I made a pretty good baroness. None of the ladies, not even you, were onto me. (*Rumbling sound in L. wing.*) Hullo! Here's a carriage driving up, now. Bet it's the real baroness, just in the nick of time! (*They both go to window.*) That must be her, sure enough,—the swell, with the fur-lined coat and white ostrich feathers. And there's her maid, and her pug dog, and six trunks! My, she's stylish! Beats me all hollow. I'd like to stay and meet her if I had time.

MRS. W. Oh, heavens! Haven't you done enough already?

GEOR. Oh, don't mention it! That was only a trifle. Come, Mrs. Warrington, don't be shy! Take a brace! Everything depends on you. See, here comes Octavia. She's as proud as Punch, (*OCTAVIA opens door slowly, R., still talking and laughing with some one inside*), and she's just dying to present to you, and the baroness, and all your friends, the only genuine article, beware of imitations, the real Count Otto von Walden!

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